
S. Veselica-Majhut, *Textual Analysis of Večernji List...* - SRAZ L, 3-23 (2005)

UDC 81'27:070.431(497.5)

Original scientific paper

Received on 11 May 2005

Accepted for publication on 16 December 2005

Textual Analysis of *Večernji List* Front Page Headlines

Snježana Veselica-Majhut
Faculty of Philosophy, Zagreb

The paper offers a textual analysis of a sample of headlines published on the front pages of *Večernji list* in two socioculturally different periods, 1988, a year of late socialism and 2000, ten years after the transitional processes started. The goal of the paper is to trace down and analyse the shifts observed within a particular discourse type and relate them to wider changes within society. The methodological procedure is conceived as including two levels of analysis, linguistic and intertextual, drawn from the framework of Critical Discourse Analysis as designed by the British linguist Norman Fairclough, and complemented with 'social semiotics' of the British linguists, Gunther Kress and Theo van Leeuwen.

Introduction

The aim of this paper is to trace down and analyse discursive shifts that are visible in media texts when they are framed in different social and cultural contexts. The wider social and cultural changes that have occurred in the so called transitional societies in the last fifteen years seem to be particularly suitable for the research into the interrelatedness of social and cultural changes and changes in discursive practices and patterns. In my research into changes that occurred in the order of discourse of the daily press in Croatia in the postsocialist period, part of which is presented in this paper, I have concentrated on a sample of texts from *Večernji list*.



Večernji list has long been the daily paper with the largest circulation in Croatia (at the moment its circulation is 500,000 and it is read by roughly 25 per cent of the population).¹ Part of its appeal to the broad masses of the population is achieved by the particular inflection of its 'public idiom', i.e. of the voice deployed in the communication with its readership, and by the particular mixture of public and private perspectives present in its editorial policy.

The most useful analytical framework to rely on in the exploration of links between social and cultural practices and properties of media texts seems to be the version of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), as developed by the British linguist Norman Fairclough. Fairclough's framework is an attempt to create an integrative approach which will enable the CDA on the one hand to 'relate changing media discursive practices' to 'wider social and cultural changes' (Fairclough 1995a: 66) and on the other hand to integrate, until recently divergent, research practices of textual analysis with 'reception analysis' and an analysis of the production end of the communication processes:

This version of CDA is conceived as mapping three different sorts of analysis on to one another in an attempt at integrated statements which link social and cultural practices to properties of texts. These three sorts of analysis are:

- analysis of texts (spoken, written or involving a combination of semi-otic modalities, e.g. televisual texts) – analysis of discourse practices of production, distribution and consumption
- analysis of social and cultural practices which frame discourse practices and texts (Bell and Garrett 1998: 144).

Having in mind the main objective of my research, it seemed particularly rewarding to combine linguistic and intertextual analysis (within Fairclough's framework comprising textual analysis) because:

Linguistic features of texts provide evidence which can be used in intertextual analysis, and intertextual analysis is a particular sort of interpretation of that (linguistic) evidence – an interpretation which locates the text in relation to social repertoires of discourse practices, i.e. orders of discourse. It is a cultural interpretation in that it locates the particular text within the facet of the culture that is constituted by (networks of)

¹ These data are taken from a recent market research published in VL, April 14, 2001.





orders of discourse. The linguistic analysis is, in an obvious sense, closer to what is “there” on paper or on the audio or video-tape, whereas the intertextual analysis is at one remove of abstraction from it. Consequently, in intertextual analysis the analyst is more dependent upon social and cultural understanding. This can seem problematic to those who expect more ‘objective’ forms of linguistic analysis. Nevertheless, linking the linguistic analysis of texts to an intertextual analysis is crucial to bridging the gap between text and language on the one hand, and society and culture on the other (Fairclough 1995b: 61).

Within the investigation of socially and culturally conditioned changes in the discourse of *Večernji list* I will focus attention on the construction of its headlines as a particular discourse type within the order of discourse of *Večernji list*.

Therefore, in the following analysis two samples of headlines from *Večernji list* front pages belonging to two socioculturally different periods (1988 – the last year of late socialism and 2000- a year in which transitional processes have lasted for a decade) are examined. The sample was created on a weekly basis by the method of systematic random sampling. More precisely, the sample encompasses all the headlines and other textual material appearing on the front pages in two periods: June 2-June 9 1988, and June 1-June 8 2000. The sample is examined with the aim of carrying out a two-fold analysis:

a) a linguistic analysis

At this level of analysis properties of the text dimension, that is, signs present on the page, are examined taking into account specific use of two semiotic codes, the verbal and the visual. It should be noted that the scope and the main objective of this paper make it impossible to carry out a thorough multisemiotic analysis of the front page. However, certain properties of the visual code (typography, physical organisation of the headlines on the page, etc...) are examined insofar as they contribute to the more comprehensive decoding of the verbal code message.

b) an intertextual analysis

At this level of analysis the focus is placed on the examination of ‘the traces of discourse practice in the text’, i.e. discourse practices, which point to the dimension of sociocultural practices are examined through their presence in the text, i.e. through their linguistic enactment.





All the headlines appearing on a particular newspaper page, in this case the front page, are included into the sample in order to enable the analysis to comply with notions recently voiced within the fields of critical linguistics and discourse analysis that an analysis of segments of media texts larger than single news stories will enable more extended insight into the ways the discourse works within the media order of discourse. For instance, Fowler suggests a whole page analysis as a necessary step to enable a further advancement of research:

Questions of format, typography, the use of various kinds of visuals, the juxtaposing of articles... make up another important dimension of analysis to be added to critical linguistics (Fowler 1991: 225).

However, while it may be justified to look at a page as a single text difficulty arises concerning the methodology to be used in the analytical approach to the multi-semiotic properties of media texts. While theoretical considerations both of critical linguistics (see Fowler 1991: 225) and critical discourse analysis (see Fairclough 1995a, 1995b)² clearly express that the print media texts should be attended to as multisemiotic, i.e. as using the verbal code along with the visual code and this demand has been met (see Montgomery 2000: 330-345) in practical research, not much progress has been achieved in the development of the appropriate methodology for such an analysis.

A theoretical framework providing methodological tools for a multisemiotic analysis of media texts is to be found in "social semiotics" by Kress and van Leeuwen whose concepts are used in the analysis below.³

Aware of the growing significance of the visual code in texts produced in modern society, Kress and Leeuwen try to develop 'the grammar of visual design' conceived as 'inventories of the major compositional structures which have become established as conventions in the course

² Analysis of texts needs to be multisemiotic analysis in the case of the press and television, including analysis of photographic images, layout and the overall visual organization of pages, and analysis of film and of sound effects. A key issue is how these other semiotic modalities interact with language in producing meanings, and how such interactions define different aesthetics for different media (Fairclough 1995b: 58).

³ Moreover, Kress and van Leeuwen see the field of discourse analysis as an area for the immediate application of their work, where there is a growing need for the development of analytical tools appropriate to approaching the visual language in media discourse (see Kress and van Leeuwen 1996: 13).





of the history of visual semiotics' (Kress and Leeuwen 1996: 1). On the basis of induction, they come to observe certain patterns which may be formulated as semiotic generalizations and postulate three principles – of information value, salience, and framing – as governing the organization of space on the page and proceed by assigning certain information values to certain zones of the page (left and right zone, top and bottom, centre and margin). It is difficult not to agree with the assumption that different zones of the page carry different information value, and that, on the basis of our age-old experience of reading from top to bottom and from left to right we have become accustomed to a certain way of reading, and have, therefore, become accustomed to expect that certain items placed at certain zones carry certain "weight". In the analysis which follows it is therefore presumed that the top and bottom parts of the page carry different information values which are, in terms of Kress and Leeuwen's discussion, called *Ideal* and *Real*:

...for something to be *Ideal* means that it is presented as the idealized or generalized essence of the information, hence also as its, ostensibly, most salient part. The *Real* is then opposed to this in that it presents more specific information (e.g. details), more "down-to-earth" information (e.g. photographs as documentary evidence, or maps or charts), or more practical information (e.g. practical consequences, directions for actions). This of course is no less ideological (Kress and Leeuwen 1996: 193).

Thus, along these lines, one may argue that when an item is given the top position it is assigned the ideological values of the general, the abstract, and then, probably, as a culturally conditioned evaluation, the value of being more important, as opposed to the ideological values of the real, conceptualized in terms of the specific, the concrete, the particular, and consequently the less important. In other words, this opposition may be conceptualized in terms of the dichotomy of general-particular, abstract-concrete, generic reference - specific reference, essence - its particular concretization. Therefore, one may conceptualize the opposition between the two zones of the page (top and bottom) as infusing the items placed in them with different "weight" on the basis of our civilizationally innate practice of reading from top to bottom (or from left to right).

Apart from the division along the vertical axis, space is quite often divided along the horizontal axis, and such a division implies the information values of the *Given* and the *New*.





When pictures or layouts make significant use of the horizontal axis, positioning some of their elements left, and other, different ones, right of the centre (which does not, of course, happen in every composition) the elements placed on the left are presented as *Given*, the elements placed on the right as *New*. For something to be *Given* means that it is presented as something the viewer already knows, as a familiar and agreed-upon point of departure for the message. For something to be *New* means that it is presented as something which is yet not known, or perhaps not yet agreed upon by the viewer, hence as something to which the viewer must pay special attention. Broadly speaking, the meaning of the *New* is therefore “problematic”, “contestable”, “the information at issue”; while the *Given* is presented as commonsensical, self evident. This structure is ideological in the sense that it may not correspond to what is the case either for the producer or for the consumer of the image or layout: the important point is that the information is presented as though it had the status or value for the reader, and that readers have to read it within that structure, even if that valuation may be rejected by a particular reader (Kress and Leeuwen 1996: 187).

Thus, to reformulate it slightly, *Given* (i.e. the imposed information value of the left zone) is what is, as in sentence composition, presupposed to be consensually accepted, while the right zone is used for the introduction of new, and thus potentially problematic, points, or points which are not assumed to be consensually agreed upon. This distinction seems to lie in the ideological, rather than cognitive, values of right-left zones, and may be formulated in the sense that the *Given* position implies that the item is presented as incontestable, not to be brought into question, but accepted, while the *New* position implies that the presentation of the issue is open to challenge, to negotiation.

Analysis

A glance at a list of headlines published on the front pages of the sample in 1988 reveals that they are rather short (it is the size of font which enables them to dominate the page and not the length of the text) and that they rarely contain a clause or sentence.

Among those which do not contain a clause, that is, do not contain a verb element, the usual pattern is to deploy a simple or complex noun





phrase, as in "Partija demokratske alternative" (Party of democratic alternative), "Ples cijena" (Dance of prices), "Utrka s preponama" (Hurdle race), "Devizna injekcija protiv inflacije" (Foreign currency injection against inflation), "Zbrka s kamatama" (Mess with interest rates), "Obrana iz svih oružja" (Defence from all weapons), to cite only a few belonging to this pattern. The form, in which the head noun is further qualified by postmodification, leads us to suppose that the missing verb element is the verb "to be". They seem to be truncated expressions whose fuller form, if recovered, would go along the lines of asserting the existence of something, that is, of qualifying an entity as being this or that. For example, the fuller expression recoverable from them could go along the following lines: "It is a party of the democratic alternative" or "It is a hurdle race", or "It is a defence from all weapons", or "There is a mess with interest rates". Pushing this line of analysis further, the unuttered content, which is left for the readers to infer, seems to be along the lines of asserting what this entity is not. For example: "It is a party of the democratic alternative, and not of the bureaucratic, undemocratic... ", "It is a hurdle race, not plain sailing", "There is a mess with interest rates, and not a breakdown of the bank system", etc. However, attention should be drawn to the form of these headlines, which reveals a great deal about the policy of the representation of issues and the patterns of the voice of the newspaper. The use of noun phrases bears witness to an effort to name the issues the paper reports on and thereby to evaluate and classify them. We should bear in mind that each act of naming is actually an act of classifying and categorizing. (Note that no proper nouns appear, that is, the phenomena are not named by their specific names; they are not given any individual reference, but are rather defined). Thus, headlines belonging to this pattern may be perceived as clearly revealing the intention of the paper to provide readers with mental formulas for understanding developments in the public domain, formulas which may prove very useful when readers have to make sense of what they are reading. It is not difficult to conclude that the main intention of headlines structured in such a way is to give short-hand guidelines, to extract the gist, not of an issue encoded as an event or an action, but of its meaning, and to present this to the reader. Another point that needs to be clearly stated is that these formulas are not attributed to any specific author (if they are, it is done in such a way that the source is placed in the background); they are actually uttered by the voice of the newspaper, a voice which judges, evaluates, categorizes, comments, and a voice which,





because it is not disguised behind some other source, constitutes itself as a participant in the discourse, moreover as a participant which has established itself as credible and indisputable. To put it more simply, by not being authored, i.e. assigned to a particular individual, these truncated statements are staged as being of absolute, rather than relative, value; they are not attributed to identifiable individuals, whose credibility is a matter of the reader's judgement, but to the newspaper itself.

It should be noted that the above interpretation is based partly on linguistic evidence (the lexico-grammatical structures used) and partly on knowledge of the context of these discursive practices (discourse practices of the media institutions in the socialist period). By contrasting these two types of knowledge, which is the procedure of intertextual analysis, we may see how specific linguistic structures (qualifying noun phrases) are used as a discursive enactment of sociocultural practices. To put it simply, the authority and the role of an arbitrator of ideologically correct judgements, traced in the linguistic text of headlines, may be, in interpretation, related to the relationships between the media institutions and the state during the period of socialism. The close relationship between the state and the media within which the media are a service of the state-party complex has its various aspects which are observable on the level of discourse practices. The dimension of the interaction of sociocultural practices and discourse practices during this period may be well illustrated by a quotation from a prominent Slovenian media sociologist:

Before the late 1980s,⁴ media policy throughout Eastern Europe was rather simple. State responsibility for print and broadcast media was legitimized in terms of the political, educational and cultural importance of the media to society (and, of course, to the state). Because of their educational and propaganda functions, the media represented a means of transmission (similar to other educational institutions) for an authoritative definition of reality. (...) All forms of external control over the media (including state censorship) and those internally generated (e.g., self censorship) were

⁴ Note that the notion that the democratization of the sphere of communication started in the late 1980s does not apply to all socialist countries in the same measure (within Yugoslavia, Croatia was one of the more closed in these terms) and that changes were visible more in the appearance of independent media than in the changes within official media, such as *Večernji list*.





aimed at maximizing the role of the media in popularizing the ruling ideology and state policy (Splichal 1990: 27).

These, in terms of Western journalism, unusually close institutional links, along with the concept of the social role of the media as an educator, found their discursive expressions in a particular style of the press, in the analysis above evident in the practices of the composition of headlines. This is particularly visible in the de-personalization of the discourse, which points to the relations of authority being constructed between the newspaper and its readers.

A lack of individual reference in the sample of front pages from 1988 is evident both in visual and textual aspects of this discourse. Thus, the central photo depicting a mass of anonymous ordinary people (note the collectivity depicted in these photos) is matched by a lack of personal nouns in the text on these items. Though, as I said, the source of classificatory truncated statements in the headlines is usually not cited, and when it is, it is pushed into the background (note the letter font), and when named, the source is rarely a person but, almost as a rule, a collective political body (exceptions are items which refer to international politics and sports), such as *Vijeće republika i pokrajina Skupštine SFRJ* (Council of Republics and Provinces of the Assembly of SFRJ).

So far, I have been concerned with the grammatical structure of the headlines in an attempt to reveal the role this grammatical structure plays in achieving particular communicative purposes. Another point worth emphasizing is the ample reliance on figurative language. On the one hand, the use of figurative language, in particular metaphors, bears witness to the persuasive properties of this style (see Montgomery 2000: 156). On the other hand, this usage points to the intertextuality of the discourse since the figures of speech are not a common property of the official language, but rather a common property of the literary discourse the press discourse relies on. (Note, however, since this is relevant for the discussion of front page discourse in the post-socialist period, that the discourse of official political communication is replaced by literary discourse rather than by what can be very broadly and vaguely termed "lifeworld" discourse.)

Within the sample, headlines announcing issues from the sphere of economics rely particularly on metaphors. My sample is not large





enough to be able to make generalizations about terms in which economic phenomena are recontextualised via metaphors. (This would lend more precise insights into a very interesting area; a detailed study of this has been done by Ivo Žanić. See Žanić 1986).

However, the sample is large enough to bring out two points related to the:

- a) representational functions
 - b) interpersonal functions
- of the metaphorical discourse used.

The sphere of economics is, in the conditions of a hybridized planned economy, represented in terms of medical phenomena and thus recontextualized into the domain of medicine. Thus, the metaphor in the headline “Devizna injekcija protiv inflacije” (Foreign currency injection against inflation) encodes inflation as a sort of illness, with two implications: that diseases are phenomena beyond our control, and on the other hand that they are curable, particularly if an efficient therapy is prescribed, as is suggested by the term injection. Thus, drawing on the field of medicine has two effects: first, the effect is to encode inflation as a disease, that is, as being completely outside human control,⁵ and, second, a discourse drawn upon is a discourse of common experience (while all of us understand what an injection is, we may not understand complex economic categories). In other words, a strong interpersonal function is performed by bringing complex economic issues closer to the terms which people with a poor knowledge of the economy would be able to understand.

“Ples cijena” (Dance of prices) is another metaphor used to represent inflation. Apart from the fact that it recontextualises the economic issue of inflation in the domain of common experience, the metaphor is interesting from the point of view of the implied relations of transitivity. What is suggested is that prices are agents, they perform an action of their own will, beyond our control, and that they “dance”. Again, an image from the “lifeworld” is evoked, and not an unpleasant one, to describe the rise of prices. Notice also “Zarade prešle granicu” (Earnings exceeded “limit”), where earnings are represented as an agent with its own will,⁶ or “Mjere

⁵ And consequently to justify the inefficiency of the government's economic policies

⁶ This is particularly incongruent in the context of a planned economy where wages were regulated by the state.





se uhodavaju" (Measures are gathering pace) where "economic measures" are an agent of their own, who do perform actions, but without human agency.⁷

I will now turn my attention to a small set of headlines which do contain a verb element, like "Plaće poravnati u devet mjeseci" (Wages to be levelled in nine months) where the verb form used is the infinitive. (Other headlines belonging to this pattern are: "Privredu osloboditi tutorstva" (Economy to be freed from tutelage), "Vratiti sjaj velikog kluba" (Great club's glory to be restored). The use of the infinitive is significant within this discussion for two reasons: first, it is a form used in other orders of discourse to utter decrees and commands. Thus, choice relationships in the above example may be considered in terms of a choice between presenting the statement as a prediction or a decree or command. In Croatian it is possible to give orders with the use of modals or imperatives, for instance "Plaće treba poravnati" (Wages should be levelled), or "Plaće se moraju poravnati" (Wages must be levelled) or "Poravnajte plaće" (Level the wages). While it may be argued that the infinitive is used rather than a modal for reasons of brevity, it has a further effect as modals imply variable levels of authoritativeness (which influences the power relations between speakers-receivers). On the other hand, the use of the imperative in Croatian implies the use of a personal pronoun (*ti* or *vi*, which is significant for the relations of power and distance between collocutors). Thus, the infinitive form enables the complete exclusion of the receiver, and, because of this, is a particularly suitable form for highly impersonal and authoritative statements.

Continuing this line of discussion, it should be said that a number of the headlines lacking a verb element could be deciphered as containing the infinitive as an unstated, but presupposed, verb element. For example, "Promjenama do stabilnijeg razvoja" (Through changes to more stable development) would, in its full form, read as "Promjenama postići stabilniji razvoj" (Changes are to lead to more stable development).

To conclude, the headlines in the sample from 1988 tend:

a) not to encode issues as events but as short-hand formulations of their meanings, thus showing an intention to guide readers in their cognitive decoding of issues rather than informing them about "what is going on"

⁷ And therefore the government is excused.





b) not to encode issues as events or actions, but to present them as decrees directed at impersonalized and highly distant receivers, who are expected to obey

c) to present issues as actions performed by abstract categories (measures, earnings) rather than by their real agents, when encoding them as dynamic developments (rather than in static terms as in a) and b))

An examination of the whole sample of front pages containing the above analysed headlines reveals quite a stable pattern in their layout. The polarisation of *Real-Ideal* works in the sense that headlines announcing issues belonging to the public domain (home politics, international politics, the economy) are placed in the zone of *Ideal*, i.e. above the central photo. They do not contain any visual material, with the exception of the example page where there is a photo of Reagan and Gorbachov. The restricted means of the visual code are, however, employed to achieve salience of these headlines; an interplay of black and white is used to enhance the salience of the headlines as well as an impressively larger font of letters than in the bottom part. Therefore, the principles of information value and salience seem to correspond closely. The bottom section, on the other hand, regularly contains information on particular types of issues: sports, weather, accidents and human-interest stories (like the news about the visit to the workers of the Duga Resa factory), and news belonging to the Black Chronicle page (Fikret Abdić's court proceedings).

It may be concluded that the reported public events and developments are regularly assigned to the top section, i.e. to the *Ideal*. Items concerning topics that are considered to be part of the private domain, i.e. beyond the control and influence of social forces, are placed in the bottom part, with the central part, which is occupied by a large photo, used as a site for the negotiation of these two domains.

The second part of the analysis will focus on the sample page from 2000.

The first impression is that the page is overcrowded with various randomly placed items, with a multitude of photos and headlines written in a variety of fonts. Therefore, the first impression readers may receive when they compare the pages from 1988 with those from 2000 is a contrast in the amount and diversity of textual and visual material.

On the sample page the top section is reserved for an advertisement for "Nova strugalica" ("New scratchcard game") a prize-winning game played by readers. In terms of assessing the construction of readers' identities and of the newspaper's voice, this item is highly significant. Placed in the *Ideal*,





across the whole page, thus defying left-right polarisation, it clearly reveals the significance assigned to the role of readers as consumers. "Strugalica" is usually the sole item on the front page which points to the promotional and advertising order of discourse. In its copy the discourse of advertising (like "U najčitanijem malom oglasniku Večernjeg lista potražite serijski broj svoje strugalice"⁸ – Look for the serial number of your *strugalica* in the classified ads with the largest circulation) is fused with the discourse of the private domain: "Preuzimajući novi automobil sretna je dobitnica izjavila da će konačno nakon dvadeset godina, otkako je položila vozački ispit, sjesti za upravljač vlastitog automobila" (Picking up her new car the lucky winner said that she would finally, twenty years after passing her driving test, sit at the wheel of her own car).

The populist tone is clearly visible in this discourse, more precisely, in its drawing on the discourse of advertising (the direct address of readers) and the discourse of "lifeworld", i.e. on an experience of a pronouncedly private character - the fact that "one of us" got a car, or the fact that "one of us" has not driven a car for twenty years. Within Kress and Leeuwen's scheme, this is the place for highly generalized items.⁹ I would argue that the ideological positioning of "Strugalica" in the *Ideal*, a place where many newspapers print their mastheads, has exactly this function, i.e. the function of an extended masthead. Read in this way, its message to readers becomes clearer – it is your favourite newspaper, the newspaper with an advertisement section with the most readers in Croatia (najčitaniji mali oglasnik) which gives you this opportunity to "scratch and win", and go home with a car. By buying *Večernji list* (and it is important to note that what is at stake is the "buying" not the "reading" of VL, as suggested by the fact that reference is made to "Mali oglasnik", an advertisement section) you are included in this highly desirable circle. Thus, this may be seen as a very open and direct construction of readers as consumers and a re-location of the values of the newspaper from being an excellent

⁸ It should also be noticed that the copy uses *ti* and *vi* variably. In the slogan "Ostruži i osvoji" (Scratch and win) *ti* is used, which later switches to *vi*.

⁹ It should be said that both in the sample period and in some other periods which I checked "Strugalica" is sometimes placed where it is expected to be, at the bottom or in the bottom right corner (*Real New*). The major competitor of VL, *Jutarnji list*, places its prize winning game at the bottom of the page.





source of information, an agent of the public sphere, to being an agent in the consumer world.

Apart from the textual properties of “Strugalica” and the way its particular configuration of discourse functions within *Večernji list*’s order of discourse, attention should be paid to sociocultural practices indicated by this section. The practice of the two Croatian dailies with the largest circulations, *Večernji list* and *Jutarnji list*, of including prize-winning games points to their struggle to ensure daily sales. Therefore, extending the discussion to the level of intertextual analysis, it should be noted that the position of the newspapers, which

under the old regimes... were owned mainly by the ruling parties, rather than by the state, but they often received state subsidies... changed radically after the revolutionary changes in 1989 and 1990. At least in some East-Central European countries (particularly in Hungary and Poland), the press was left to its own resources and to the marketplace almost overnight. Generally, commercialization of the press (based on the principle of profit maximization and on advertising as an essential source of income) and the suppression of governmental subsidies for newspapers and magazines caused painful consequences for large sectors of the press (Splichal 1990: 36).

On the sample page the bottom part comprises several headlines, disconnected from the central part by the use of empty spaces, and mutually disconnected by thin bars. Visually, they are rendered as being of the same order and as belonging to “the same story”. They are:

1) “Ministartstvo osniva drugo sveučilište u Zagrebu”, “Sukob Kraljević Jeren” (minor headline), “Studenti Hrvatskih studija: Prosvjed do ostavke rektora” (Ministry establishes another university in Zagreb), preceded by a minor headline (Conflict Kraljević-Jeren) and with two small photos of minister Kraljević and vice chancellor Jeren next to each other. Beneath the photos and the headlines there is a minor headline – Students of Croatian Studies: Protests until vice chancellor Jeren’s resignation.)

2) “Ministrica Ana Stavljenić-Rukavina: U vozačkim dozvolama – rubrika za darovanje organa” (Minister Ana Stavljenić-Rukavina: In driver’s licences – section for organ donation), accompanied by a photo of minister Stavljenić





3) "Posjet šefa Europske komisije (minor headline) – Prodi biciklom obilazi Istru" (Visit of European Commission Chief (minor headline) Prodi visits Istria on bike)

4) "Novosel napušta Dinamo i otvara košarkašku akademiju" (Novosel leaves Dinamo and opens basketball academy)

5) "Zagreb posjetila Australka Jasmuheen – Sedam godina ništa ne jedem" (Australian Jasmuheen visits Zagreb – I haven't eaten anything for seven years)

Apart from the fact that they are physically juxtaposed, the manner of their construction shows a strong tendency of personalization. Thus, an issue from the sphere of higher education, the decisions and disagreements over the future of Croatian Studies, is represented as a conflict of two individuals Kraljević - Jeren and not of two institutional positions, the Ministry and the University. The anonymous Australian, who appears in the paper due to her eccentric eating habits, is given least salience, but both her statement "I haven't eaten anything for seven years" and minister Ivanišević's "I will visit Tuta in the Hague" are presented as statements about personal decisions or experiences. It should also be noticed that in the item on Romano Prodi's visit to Croatia, the construction of his identity is ambivalent. His official title is placed in the small font text above the photo, while in the major headline he is referred to as just "Prodi". His visit is represented in terms of a private domain concern, in terms of leisure and entertainment, and he is depicted, not as a statesman visiting Croatia, but as a sort of VIP tourist. There is a clear intention to discursively mix, both in the linguistic and visual code, the domains of private and public, or rather to represent the domain of the public in terms of private voices, private concerns, and consequently, private consequences. In critical accounts of Western journalism this tendency, called "personalization" in critical linguistics (see Fowler), is usually assigned to the discourses of the tabloid press. In the Croatian context it may be seen as a discursive strategy for enacting a distance from the practices of socialist press. This tendency of post-socialist press discourse, which I may tentatively call "tabloidisation", is specific in that it has spread across various orders of discourse (in the sense of various media outlets) which in other aspects are not similar to the Western tabloid press. It also bears witness to the links with sociocultural and discourse practices, that is with the notion





of editors that the manner of encoding issues as personalized news items helps sell the paper.¹⁰

The headlines, when compared with those from 1988, have undergone radical changes in the way of their composition, and this may be indicative of the fact that a different understanding of journalism and of the role of the newspaper, and consequently of the readers' identity, is at work.

First, the headlines are long; they constitute clauses or sentences. Thus, to cite those on the whole of the sample page:

a) "Rožiću, Buljanu i Kalebu dosuđen pritvor" (Rožić, Buljan and Kaleb held for trial);

b) "Koordinacija vladajućih stranaka odlučila: Pred Sabor šestorkine ustavne promjene, a ne Mesićeve" (Constitutional changes of the six-party coalition, and not Mesić's, to go before Parliament, decides coordination of parties in power);

c) "Kompletne imovinske kartice hrvatskih ministara – Radoš i Lučin na "goloj plaći", Čačić dioničar u osam tvrtki – Plaća supruga Željke Antunović poslovna tajna, Fižulićeva supruga zarađuje dvije i pol ministarske plaće" (Complete income cards of Croatian ministers – Radoš and Lučin on "salary with no allowances", Čačić shareholder in eight companies, Salary of Željka Antunović's husband business secret, Fižulić's wife earns two and half ministerial salaries);

d) "Stjepan Ivanišević, ministar pravosuđa: U Haagu ću posjetiti Tutu, Arhiv HIS-a seli se u Državni, gdje će istražitelji imati svoju sobu" (Stjepan Ivanišević, Minister of Justice: I will visit Tuta in the Hague, HIS (Croatian Intelligence Agency) Archives move to State (Archives) where investigation officers are to have own room;

e) "Ministartstvo osniva drugo sveučilište u Zagrebu, Sukob Kraljević-Jeren (manji naslov), Studenti Hrvatskih studija: Prosvjed do ostavke rektora"

(Ministry establishes another university in Zagreb (preceded by a minor headline), Conflict Kraljević-Jeren (accompanied by two small photos of minister Kraljević and vice chancellor Jeren next to each other).

¹⁰ It has a particular resonance on the level of discourse practices of consumption, too. Though this dimension is not part of my study, some preliminary research on the consumption of daily papers in Croatia has shown that readers very often say they are disappointed because they cannot find items from the front page in the paper itself (which may be interpreted as a common sense formulation of the fact that items are differently encoded on the front pages and in the body of the newspaper).





Beneath the photos and the headlines there is a minor headline – Students of Croatian Studies: Protests until vice chancellor Jeren's resignation.)

f) "Ministrica Ana Stavljenić-Rukavina: U vozačkim dozvolama – rubrika za darovanje organa"

(Minister Ana Stavljenić-Rukavina: In driver's licences – section for organ donation, accompanied by a photo of minister Stavljenić)

g) "Posjet šefa Europske komisije – Prodi biciklom obilazi Istru"

(Visit of European Commission Chief (minor headline): Prodi visits Istria on bike)

h) Novosel napušta Dinamo i otvara košarkašku akademiju (Novosel leaves Dinamo and opens basketball academy)

i) "Zagreb posjetila Australka Jasmuheen – Sedam godina ništa ne jedem" (Australian Jasmuheen visits Zagreb – I haven't eaten anything for seven years)

There are two particular features of the structure of these headlines that may be immediately observed:

1) they contain whole clauses, that is, grammatico-logical units

2) these clauses, in terms of speech acts, are of two types:

a) first-person statements "I will visit Tuta in the Hague", "I haven't eaten anything for seven years" in which the speaker says something about his/her own decisions, plans, opinions, etc...

b) third-person statements "Rožić, Buljan and Kaleb held for trial", "Novosel leaves Dinamo and...", "Prodi visits...", "Radoš and Lučin on 'salary with no allowances'", "Ministry founds..."

Two features point to the very clear discursive effort to erase the boundary between the domain of public issues and the domain of private issues, and to represent them as interchangeable. First, the practices of naming participants: thus, though sometimes titled, officials are referred to only by their last name in the same manner as are celebrities from show business, sports and participants in various scandals. Thus, there is a clear effort on the part of the newspaper to present them as being of the same kind: Rožić (a football player), Radoš (minister of defence), Prodi (president of the European Commission), Jasmuheen (an eccentric). Apart from being linguistically encoded as belonging to the same domain, they are physically juxtaposed.¹¹ Nevertheless, it should be emphasized

¹¹ A more extensive analysis of the visual code, which could not be carried out within the scope of this paper, would show that they are visually encoded along the same lines, which contributes to the effect of the interchangeability of the mediation of these two domains, unimaginable in the socialist discourse.





that this practice is not unitary, but open to a high degree of variability. A high degree of variability in itself, and the heterogeneity related to it, is a significant mark of the instability of sociocultural practices which frame discursive practices.

To conclude, the headlines in the sample from 2000 display a tendency:

- a) to encode issues in terms of the decisions and experiences of individuals ("Posjetit ću Tutu u Haageu" (I will visit Tuta in the Hague))
- b) to encode issues in terms of actions performed by individuals ("Prodi biciklom obilazi Istru" (Prodi visits Istria on bike))
- c) to encode issues in terms of actions in which individuals are "affected" ("Rožiću, Buljanu i Kaleb u dosuduđen pritvor" (Rožić, Buljan and Kaleb held for trial))

Conclusion

The analysis of changes in discursive practices deployed in the construction of front page headlines has provided data useful for the establishment of whether, and in which respects, discursive changes are linked to changes in social and discourse practices framing communicative events.

It has pointed to changes on two interconnected levels:

- 1) on the level of the textual composition of headlines
- 2) on the level of the visual organisation of headlines on the page

In 1988 the analysed headlines show a tendency to avoid encoding issues as events, but rather as short-hand (the dominant use of truncated statements) formulations and interpretations (heavy reliance on nominal structures) of mediated reality. A particular usage of lexico-grammatical structures (the use of infinitives and imperatives) contributes to the construction of the 'voice' of the newspaper as an impersonal and authoritative voice whose main task is to educate rather than to inform. The impersonality of the mode of address of its readers is further reinforced by a highly restricted use of references to individual agents,





and a preference for references to collective bodies or abstract phenomena. These discursive patterns are, in the intertextual analysis, clearly linked to the prevalent sociocultural practices of the period (i.e. the notion that the role of the newspaper is that of an educator and transmitter of ideologically correct interpretations of reality and the unusually close institutional links between the state and the media, typical of socialist societies).

The analysis of the set of headlines from 2000 shows that the patterns of their composition have undergone radical changes. The predominant pattern is to encode issues either as events in which clearly named individuals take part or are affected by them or as personal decisions, intentions and opinions (linguistically enacted through the prevalent use of first-person statements). A tendency of the personalization of the discourse, in sharp contrast to the highly impersonal discourse of the socialist press, is also visible in the insistent use of individual names. The patterns of naming point to another distinctive feature of the analysed headlines – a tendency to blur the boundary between the private and public domains, or more precisely, to present the issues from the public domain in terms of the private domain. A restricted analysis of the visual code shows that it also contributes to this tendency. These discursive patterns are, in the intertextual analysis, brought into connection with changed sociocultural practices which have affected the understanding of the role of the media and their position in a postsocialist society. On the one hand, a changed understanding of the role of the press has brought about a need to distance discursively from the patterns of the socialist press (to inform and entertain rather than to educate) and on the other hand, changed relations of ownership have imposed pressures on the papers to compete in the market. The shifts in the intertextuality of the analysed samples of headlines also point to the above mentioned changes in social practices framing the daily press in Croatia (the discourse of advertising and 'lifeworld' vs. official and literary discourses).

A strictly obeyed vertical organization of the pages in 1988 has been replaced with an organization along the horizontal axis, which, by the abolishment of the *Ideal-Real* divide, contributes to the erasure of a clear division between public and private issues (carried out in the verbal code through a particular use of linguistic means discussed above). In 1988 headlines announcing issues from the sphere of politics and economy are inevitably placed in the zone of Ideal, while a very restricted number of





the items belonging to the world of entertainment and free time pursuits are placed in the zone of Real, the division clearly visually encoded by the use of central photo which divides them.

In 2000 the headlines announcing public and private issues, verbally coded as being of the same order, are further presented as being interchangeable by their physical juxtaposition on the page.

REFERENCES

- Bell, Allan and Peter Garrett. [eds.] 1998. *Approaches to Media Discourse*, Oxford: Blackwell.
- Dahlgren, Peter and Collin Sparks. [eds.] 1992. *Journalism and Popular Culture*, London: Sage.
- Deacon, David, Michael Pickering, Peter Golding and Graham Murdock. 1999. *Researching Communications*, London: Arnold.
- Fairclough, Norman. 1995a. *Critical Discourse Analysis: the Critical Study of Language*, London: Longman.
- Fairclough, Norman. 1995b. *Media Discourse*, London: Edward Arnold.
- Fiske, John. 1989. *Understanding Popular Culture*, London: Routledge.
- Fowler, Roger. 1991. *Language in the News*, London and New York: Routledge.
- Kress, Gunther and Theo van Leeuwen. 1996. *Reading Images - The Grammar of Visual Design*, London: Routledge.
- Montgomery, Martin. 2000. *Ways of Reading*, London: Routledge.
- O'Sullivan Tim, John Hartley, Danny Saunders, Martin Montgomery and John Fiske. 1994. *Key Concepts in Communication and Cultural Studies*, London: Routledge.
- Splichal, Slavko. 1990. *Media Beyond Socialism*, London: Routledge.
- Žanić, Ivo. 1986. *Mitologija inflacije*, Zagreb: Globus.

TEKSTUALNA ANALIZA NASLOVA U VEČERNJEM LISTU

Članak donosi tekstualnu analizu uzorka naslova objavljenih na naslovnim stranicama Večernjeg lista u dva u socio-kulturnom pogledu različita razdoblja: 1988., u razdoblju kasnog socijalizma i 2000., deset godina nakon početka tranzicijskih procesa. Cilj rada jest ustanoviti i analizirati pomake unutar





određenog diskursnog tipa i dovesti ih u vezu sa širim promjenama u društvu. Metodološki se postupak, koji obuhvaća dvije razine analize, lingvističku i intertekstualnu, oslanja na metodološki okvir Kritičke diskurzivne analize, kako ga je osmislio britanski lingvist Norman Fairclough, koji je u ovom radu dopunjen 'društvenom semiotikom' britanskih lingvista, Gunthera Kressa i Thea van Leeuwena.

Key Words: critical discourse analysis, intertextual analysis, media discourse, newspaper headlines, multisemiotic analysis

Ključne riječi: kritička analiza diskursa, intertekstualna analiza, medijski diskurs, novinski naslovi, multisemiotička analiza

Snježana Veselica-Majhut
Department of English
Faculty of Philosophy, University of Zagreb
Ivana Lučića 3
10 000 Zagreb, CROATIA
snjezana.veselica-majhut@zg.htnet.hr

